

## 1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND

Due to the coronavirus pandemic which began in March 2020 and anticipated lower Transit Tax revenue, Tempe explored cost-saving transit service reductions in order to minimize service impacts and while providing equitable transit service. Reductions occurred from March 2020 to October 2021 using a phased approach with outreach that took place every six months.. The use of data and equity metrics as well as public input were integral to developing a framework for how reductions were structured.

## 2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OBJECTIVES

The City of Tempe values public input and believes that community members should be engaged early on in decisions that affect them. The purpose of the Public Involvement Program (PIP) is to create an open and transparent process to help our current customers understand the changes being made. The scope of the PIP is to:

- Provide objective information to Tempe transit users and all residents regarding the decision-making framework being proposed.
- Seek and encourage the involvement of all community members.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for the public to contribute ideas and provide feedback through all phases of the process.
- Make the process accessible and engaging to all interested community members.
- Ensure access to information and engagement of underrepresented community members by utilizing recommendations made by the Equity in Action Coalition Equitable Engagement Framework that centers historically marginalized communities.

## 3. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

An early step in the Public Involvement Program was to identify the internal and external community members that have an interest in the process.

### Internal

- Mayor and Council
- City Departments
- Transportation Commission
- Sustainability Commission
- Neighborhoods Advisory Commission
- Commission on Disability Concerns
- Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission
- BIPOC communities along identified routes

### External

- Residents, businesses, and property owners with an emphasis on those that are transit users
- BIPOC communities who are disproportionately impacted
- Valley Metro
- Arizona State University
- Tempe Elementary, Kyrene, and Tempe Union High School District Administrations

#### 4. INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES & COMMUNICATION APPROACH

Public involvement and communication techniques may vary depending on the phase of the planning efforts. The approach was to facilitate working directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that the public's issues and concerns are consistently noted, understood, and considered.

While traditional methods (meetings, presentations, etc.) play an important role in public engagement, social media and electronic participation and communication tools were also extensively used to disseminate information and broaden outreach. Meetings were held via WebEx, and recorded and posted on the website for viewing.

The following dedicated websites, online URLs and social media handles were used to share information and to collect feedback throughout the process:

Website	<a href="https://tempe.gov/TransitChanges">tempe.gov/TransitChanges</a>
E-mail	<a href="mailto:neighborhoods@tempe.gov">neighborhoods@tempe.gov</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://facebook.com/cityoftempe">facebook.com/cityoftempe</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/tempegov">@tempegov</a>
Newsroom	<a href="https://tempe.gov/newsroom">tempe.gov/newsroom</a>
Comments	<a href="https://tempe.gov/TransitChanges">tempe.gov/TransitChanges</a>

The following methods were used to achieve broad and continuous public participation:

- **Postcards** mailed to households in high ridership areas as well as areas with limited access to the internet advertising meetings and the opportunity to provide feedback online.
- **Values mapping online survey** seeking input was posted on the Tempe Forum September 24-October 25, 2020 and February 20-March 21, 2021.
- **Onboard survey** conducted for October 2021 changes..
- **Posters on Orbit buses** advertising meetings and service changes and the opportunity to provide feedback online.
- **Posters at high ridership bus stops** and Tempe Transportation Center advertising meetings and the opportunity to provide feedback online.
- **Car cards** with information regarding meetings and service changes and the opportunity to provide feedback online available on buses for riders for the October 2021 changes.
- All related **documents posted** on the project website.
- Recordings of all public meetings posed on project website.

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- Articles and meeting announcements in Tempe Today waterbill newsletter.
  - Meeting and service change announcements sent to **Transportation and Neighborhoods Listservs**.
  - **Information provided to community partners** for inclusion in their newsletters (Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Tempe Authority, Tempe Tourism Bureau, school districts).
  - Meeting and service change announcements in the City's bi-weekly coronavirus newsletter.
  - Comment forms available online throughout the duration of the project.
  
  - **Presentations to the**
    - Transportation Commission
    - Sustainability Commission
    - Neighborhood Advisory Commission
    - Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission
    - Commission on Disability Concerns
    - Human Relations Commission

The communication methods used will include:

- Tempe 11
- Press release
- Social media
- City online calendar
- Fliers at businesses and gathering places along routes with high BIPOC populations
- In-person engagements with bus riders
- Digital screen announcements at City facilities regarding meetings
- Project website

## 5. PROJECT TIMELINE

- Sept. 8, 2020: Transportation Commission
- Sept. 17, 2020: Council support for timeline & framework for decision making
- Sept. 24 & 26, 2020: Virtual public meetings
- Fall 2020: Valley Metro service change public process
- Dec. 1, 2020: Transportation Commission
- Dec. 3, 2020: Council direction on Orbit fares, April 2021 service changes and advertising
- January 12, 2021: Transportation Commission
- January 21, 2021: Issue Review Session
- February 2, 2021: Commission on Disabilities
- February 3, 2021: Neighborhood Advisory Commission
- February 8, 2021: Sustainability Commission
- February 9, 2021: Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission

- February 20, & 23, 2021: Virtual Public Meeting
- April 20, 2021: Transportation Commission
- May 6, 2021: Issue Review Session
- August 10, 2021: Human Relations Commission
- October 2021: Targeted outreach activities to publicize service changes in conjunction with Valley Metro
- October 12, 2021: Transportation Commission
- October 21, 2021: Issue Review Session

## **6. PUBLIC and STAKEHOLDER MEETING SCHEDULING & ACCESS**

Online meetings were held on September 24 and 26, 2020 to present the process for determining reductions and seeking input as to what types of changes are most palatable going forward. Online meetings were held on February 20 and 23, 2021 to present the proposed changes to the public.

Special assistance is offered for persons with sight and/or hearing impairments. (48-hour advance notice) A Spanish language interpreter were available at the meetings to provide oral translation. The fact sheet and meeting materials were available in Spanish, and a bilingual phone number for information was also provided by calling (480) 350-4311. The meeting presentation was recorded and posted on the City's website 48 hours after the meeting.

Environmental justice principles and procedures were followed to improve all levels of transportation decision-making.

## **7. RESPONSIBLE DOCUMENTATION**

Documentation of all phases of the process exists for future use and understanding of how the program worked, what comments were received and how the results of the public involvement were used in proposing service reductions.

Documentation included:

- The Public Involvement Program
- List and samples of outreach and communication documents
- Recordings of all public meetings
- Database of participant contact information
- All public comments made
- Survey results

## **8. PROCESS EVALUATION & CONCLUSION**



## TRANSIT SERVICE CHANGES PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM Fall 2021

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The City of Tempe seeks continual improvement of all of its activities. An evaluation was performed throughout the public involvement process to ensure the PIP is meeting participation requirements mandated by state law. Feedback opportunities related to public involvement techniques were provided through the website and meetings and continuously reviewed.

This Public Involvement Plan may change as conditions change or additional resources become available. The most current information about upcoming meetings and comment opportunities was available on the dedicated website.

For further information about the process, please contact the following City of Tempe staff:

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